

Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 REYKJA 00221 051634Z

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TAGS: PFOR, MARR, IC, NATO

SUBJECT: IDF RETENTION ISSUE: ICELANDIC POLITICAL LEADERS
COMMENT IN CONNECTION WITH GOI-NORWEGIAN SEMINAR

1. AT NORWEGIAN-ICELANDIC SEMINAR ON DEFENSE AFFAIRS HELD
IN REYKJAVIK FEB 2-3, ICELANDIC GOVERNMENT AND PARTY LEADERS
SPOKE IN QUESTION OF ICELAND'S RELATIONS TO NATO AND CURRENT
NEGOTIATION WITH USG ON DEFENSE AGREEMENT.

2. FONMIN EINAR AGUSTSSON REITERATED STANDARD POSITION
THAT FOREIGN TROOPS SHOULD NOT BE STATIONED IN ICELAND IN TIMES
OF PEACE. WHILE THERE MIGHT BE SERIOUS DISAGREEMENT ON WHAT THAT
TERM MEANT, 23 YEARS HAD GONE BY SINCE DEFENSE
AGREEMENT WAS MADE WITH USG AND IT WAS NOW TIME TO REVISE IT.
HE STRESSED THAT ICELAND HAD NO INTENTION OF LEAVING NATO AND
SAID CURRENT REVISION OF DEFENSE AGREEMENT WAS FOR SPECIFIC
PURPOSE OF FINDING WAYS OF FULFILLING ICELAND'S OBLIGATIONS TO
NATO WITHOUT HAVING FOREIGN TROOPS IN THE COUNTRY.

3. JON SKAFTASON, RIGHT-WING PROGRESSIVE PARTY ALTHING MEM-
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PAGE 02 REYKJA 00221 051634Z

BER, STRESSED BENEFITS HE BELIEVED ICELAND HAD OBTAINED FROM

MEMBERSHIP IN NATO AND NORDIC COUNCIL. HE COMMENTED ON GROWING SOVIET MILITARY PRESENCE IN NORTH ATLANTIC AND IMPORTANCE OF NATO AS ALLIANCE FOR MUTUAL DEFENSE WHICH HAD INCREASED POLITICAL STABILITY AND REDUCED TENSION IN THIS PART OF WORLD. HE SAID DECISIONS NOW BEING MADE ARE VITAL ONES WHICH AFFECT NOT ONLY ICELAND BUT ALSO NATO ALLIES AND NORWAY. "THESE DECISIONS," HE SAID, "MUST BE MADE BY REALISTIC ASSESSMENTS OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES."

4. GYLFI GISLASON, LEADER OF SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY, STRESSED IMPORTANCE OF KEEPING UP SURVEILLANCE ACTIVITIES AT BASE. IN LATER PRESS CONFERENCE, HE SAID THAT IF FONMIN'S PROPOSALS ON DEFENSE MEANT END OF SURVEILLANCE, THEY COULD NOT BE ACCEPTED BY SDP.

5. OF PERHAPS MOST INTEREST AMONG ICELANDIC SPEAKERS WERE REMARKS OF HANNIBAL VALDIMARSSON, LEADER OF ORGANIZATION OF LIBERALS AND LEFTISTS, WHO HAS LARGELY KEPT HIS OWN COUNCIL ON DEFENSE ISSUE. AFTER POINTING OUT STRATEGIC LOCATION OF ICELAND, HE SAID IT IS "VERY IMPORTANT OR EVEN NECESSARY FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE WESTERN NATIONS TO BE ABLE TO FOLLOW THE MOVEMENTS OF SHIPS OR OTHER VESSELS IN THE ATLANTIC. I THINK ICELAND NEEDS THAT INFORMATION AS MUCH AS OTHERS." HE THOUGHT ICELANDERS SHOULD PLAY AS GREAT A ROLE AS POSSIBLE BUT, "SINCE THAT CANNOT BE DONE, IT SEEMS OBVIOUS THAT THE UNITED STATES OR NATO MUST HANDLE IT IN A WAY SIMILAR TO THE PAST." PERHAPS HIS MOST SIGNIFICANT REMARK WAS THAT "IN MY OPINION, IT IS IN THE INTERESTS OF THE DEFENSE OF ICELAND TO HAVE A SURVEILLANCE AND DEFENSE BASE IN THE COUNTRY. HOWEVER, THE DEFENSE FORCE OUGHT TO BE OF A MINIMAL SIZE" BECAUSE OF THE SMALL SIZE OF THE COUNTRY. "IF WE ARE ATTACKED, WE MUST RELY ON FAST MOVEMENT OF TROOPS ON A LARGE SCALE TO DEFEND US."

6. VALDIMARSSON SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD COMMITTED ITSELF TO DO ONE OF TWO THINGS: "EITHER TO REVISE THE AGREEMENT OR TO TERMINATE IT" AND THAT "ALL EFFORTS MUST BE MADE TO TRY TO FIND A SOLUTION ACCEPTABLE TO ICELAND AS WELL AS NATO. IT MUST BE THE ALTHING WHICH DECIDES WHAT IS ACCEPTABLE OR THE NATION ITSELF IF THE ALTHING DECIDED TO CALL FOR A REFERENDUM." HE SAID THAT IF NO AGREEMENT COULD BE REACHED, THEN THE DE-

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 REYKJA 00221 051634Z

FENSE AGREEMENT WOULD HAVE TO BE TERMINATED BUT "WE SHOULD KEEP IN MIND THAT WE ARE STILL BOUND BY THE OBLIGATIONS ON PARTICIPATION IN THE DEFENSES OF THE WESTERN NATIONS AS IS STATED IN THE NATO AGREEMENT."

7. IN WHAT WAS OBVIOUSLY INTENDED TO BE REPLY TO SPEECHES AT CONFERENCE, PEOPLE'S ALLIANCE NEWSPAPER THJODVILJINN INTERVIEWED MAGNUS KJARTANSSON, PA MINISTER, ASKING HIM FOR HIS

PARTY'S VIEW OF PROPOSALS FOR "POLICE FORCE" TO GUARD BASE. HE SAID HIS PARTY STILL OPPOSES NATO MEMBERSHIP BUT AS LONG AS IT CONTINUES, ICELAND MUST ACCEPT CERTAIN OBLIGATIONS. ONLY OBLIGATIONS ARE THOSE WHICH ICELAND UNDERTOOK IN 1949 AND THAT DOES NOT INCLUDE FOREIGN TROOPS OR MILITARY BASES IN TIMES OF PEACE. THEREFORE, PA CANNOT ACCEPT ANY FOREIGN "GUARDS" AT BASE. "THE JURISDICTION HAS TO BE ICELANDIC AND THE GUARDS MUST BE ALSO." HE SAID ICELANDERS SHOULD ALSO TAKE OVER OPERATION OF RADAR STATIONS AND ONLY FOREIGN PRESENCE WOULD BE NATO PLANES ALLOWED TO LAND "FROM TIME TO TIME UNDER EMERGENCY CIRCUMSTANCES."

8. WHEN ASKED WHAT ARE POSSIBILITIES FOR AGREEMENT ON DEFENSE ISSUE, KJARTANSSON REITERATED STANDARD PA LINE THAT PLATFORM AGREEMENT ON REMOVAL OF IDF IS ONLY BASIS FOR CONTINUED COALITION GOVERNMENT. "THE BASE MUST BE DISMANTLED." IF AGREEMENT IS REACHED ON THIS MATTER BY GOVERNMENT PARTIES, POSITION SHOULD THEN BE PUT TO USG AS ULTIMATUM. IF USG IS UNWILLING TO ACCEPT THAT POSITION, ALTHING SHOULD THEN BE REQUESTED TO TERMINATE DEFENSE AGREEMENT. IF ALTHING REFUSES, GOVERNMENT SHOULD RESIGN AND ELECTIONS BE CALLED.

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